

# **Minutes of the Meeting**

**June 17, 1999**

## Projects Reviewed

Convened: 8:30am

Transfer of Development Credits Program: Denny Triangle Pilot Project

Neighborhood Plans: Columbia City, MLK @ Holly Street,

North Beacon Hill, Rainier Beach

Downtown Urban Design Plan

Adjourned: 11:45pm

## Commissioners Present

Rick Sundberg, chair

Moe Batra

Gail Dubrow

Jeff Girvin

Nora Jaso

Peter Miller

## Staff Present

John Rahaim

Rebecca Walls

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061799.1 Project: **Commission Business**

**Action Items:**

- A. MINUTES OF THE JUNE 3<sup>RD</sup> MEETING: Approved as amended.

**Discussion Items:**

- B. LIGHT RAIL REVIEW PANEL UPDATE: The LRRP will host a workshop to explore issues regarding the station areas along Martin Luther King Way on June 25<sup>th</sup>.
- C. LIBRARY M.O.A. COVER LETTER: Rahaim reported.
- D. SKAGIT HYDRO. INTERPRETIVE DISPLAYS CONSULTANT: Proposals for the project are due July 12<sup>th</sup> and interviews will be conducted July 19<sup>th</sup> through July 21<sup>st</sup>. Commissioner Batra will be on the consultant selection panel.
- E. PUBLIC FORUM JUNE 24<sup>TH</sup>: The Seattle “Design Center” will host a public forum on June 24<sup>th</sup> from 5:00 to 7:00pm.
- F. INTER-DEPARTMENTAL TEAM MEETING JUNE 15<sup>TH</sup>: The Executive Director will host a preliminary meeting with city staff to discuss the goals, work program, and identity of the “Design Center.”
- G. GREEN STREETS: Rahaim reported.

061799.2      Project: **Transfer of Development Credits**  
                   Phase: Briefing  
                   Presenters: Nancy Ousley, Strategic Planning Office  
                                   Mark Sollitto, King County TDR Program  
                                   Marty Curry, Seattle Planning Commission  
                                   Dennis Meier, Strategic Planning Office  
                   Time: 1 hr (SDC Ref. # DC000)

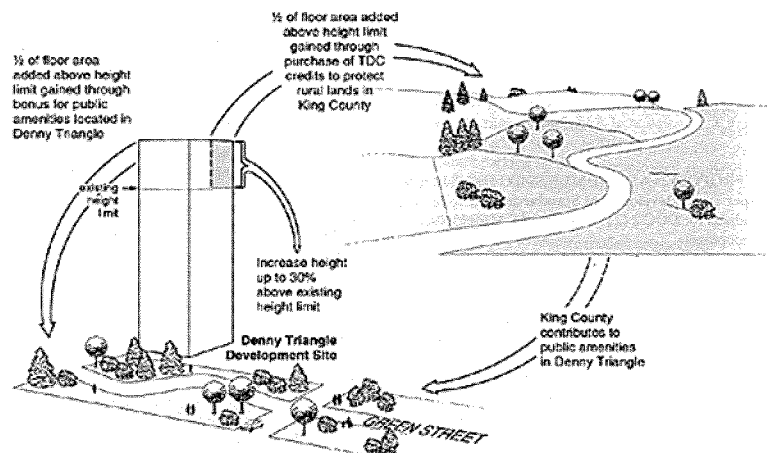
The Strategic Planning Office (SPO) has drafted recommendations for an incentive program to encourage residential development in the Denny Triangle Neighborhood. These recommendations contain the following three components:

1. The Transfer of Development Credits from Rural King County to the Denny Triangle.
2. Changes to development standards to facilitate mixed use development.
3. Rezoning the area along Sixth and Seventh Avenues, between Lenora and Blanchard Streets from Downtown Mixed Commercial (DMC 240) to Downtown Office Core (DOC 300) with a 300 foot height limit. This essentially extends the existing DOC 2 zoning designation by two blocks to the northwest.

The Transfer of Development Credits (TDC) program will establish a mechanism to transfer development potential from rural land to other incorporated areas. This program is based on the 1994 Countywide Planning Policies that direct jurisdictions to adopt programs and regulations to protect and maintain the rural character of farm and forest lands, and to direct growth to cities and urban centers.

The TDC is a land use program that reduces housing development potential in an area such as the King County rural area and transfers that development potential to another area, such as the Denny Triangle (identified as Seattle's pilot project). The rural area in King County is designated in the King County Comprehensive Plan. One credit will allow for an additional 2,000 square feet of residential floor area to be added above the zoning height limit. The program requires a minimum of four credits to be purchased which equals 8,000 square feet of residential or approximately one full floor in additional height.

In late 1998, Mayor Schell and King County Executive Sims announced their intentions to develop a proposal to transfer development credits from rural King County to the Denny Triangle Urban Center Village. This transfer of development credits would begin implementing the neighborhood plan recommendations while supporting the growth management goals of preserving rural resource areas important to the City and the County. City staff worked with the Denny Triangle neighborhood planning committee to elicit comments and find ways to coordinate the proposal with the implementation of the neighborhood plan.



The City and King County will sign an interlocal agreement for the Denny Triangle project that will commit both jurisdictions to:

- purchase, certify, and transfer development credits;
- establish the Denny Triangle as a receiving site and adopt development standards for the program;
- consider redevelopment of the Convention Center Station for mixed use and public open space; and
- monitor and evaluate the program and prepare a report within three years of implementation.

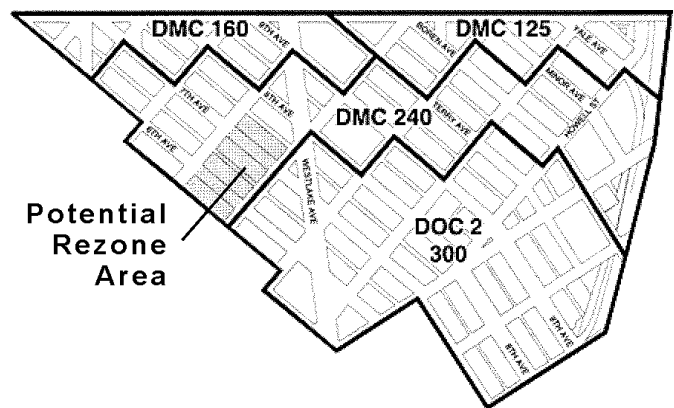
In addition, King County would fund amenities in the neighborhood and the City will conduct an annual evaluation of the program to determine if goals of the program are met.

The draft TDC proposal would designate the Denny Triangle, as defined in the adopted Neighborhood Plan, as a receiving area. A developer in Seattle may increase the height limit of a parcel, called the “receiving site”, by purchasing development credits from the rural area in King County and funding public amenities in the Denny Triangle neighborhood. A minimum of four credits must be purchased to participate in the program, half of which would fund the purchase of rural development, and the other half would fund public amenities in the neighborhood such as Green Street

Improvements, open space provision or contribution to the Denny Triangle open space fund. Rural credits may be purchased from the King County TDC Bank, or from property owners, certified by King County. The City of Seattle would give priority to sending sites in close proximity to Seattle’s watersheds. The development transfer is permanent and the sending site in rural King County can never be developed in the future.

Current upper level development standards address shadow and wind impacts of large scale development. Residential projects have no Floor Area Ratio (FAR) density limits, therefore the upper level development standards, combined with the height limit, are the only controls on the bulk of residential projects. A consultant was hired to evaluate the economic and market feasibility for the Denny Triangle Pilot Project. Based on a thorough analysis, the consultant recommended changes to the current upper level development standards, open space requirements, additional exemptions from FAR calculations, and minimum sidewalk widths and setback requirements on Green Streets. These recommendations are further delineated in the *Denny Triangle: Transfer of Development Credits from Rural Areas to Downtown Seattle, Economic and Market Feasibility*; March 1999.

For more information on the TDC program or the Denny Triangle Pilot Project contact Mark Solitto at (206) 205-0705 or at mark.solitto@metrokc.gov.



**Discussion:**

- Curry:** How will the plan relate to the zoning goals of Neighborhood Plans?
- Meier:** The Denny Triangle Neighborhood Plan calls for increases in building height and commercial development. The Comprehensive Plan outlines housing and employment goals. We are dedicated to meeting these goals.
- Dubrow:** Despite my experience and education with Planning and Design issues, I find the presentation difficult to follow. How will the TDC program address buildings that don't have historic designation? The program doesn't seem to accommodate neighborhood conservation. The program should encourage neighborhoods to identify areas that should be off limits for transferred development credits. Neighborhood residents should also have control over where development credits affect zoning changes.
- Jaso:** What will be the cumulative urban design impacts to the neighborhoods? Will open space or smaller buildings be impacted. The open space and public amenities associated with the TDCs seem vaguely defined. A larger category that includes social goals and objectives, programs, and facilities, seems to be missing from the program description.
- Dubrow:** Who decides which amenities are provided?
- Meier:** The City will probably manage the fund, while Neighborhood Plans will determine how the money is spent.
- Dubrow:** The public amenities should correlate with those identified in the Neighborhood Plans. I am concerned that the development of open space with individual projects will result in small, left over pieces of land that are too small and are not integrated into a larger network of streetscape and open space improvements. I recommend that new open spaces be consolidated into large, well-designed public spaces. The mechanism for determining what amenities are developed seems unresolved. It is best to have the neighborhoods in control of how the money is spent. The amenities designated in the Neighborhood Plan should be prioritized.
- Jaso:** Will the program encourage street-level retail development? Rents that are reduced to eighty percent of median income in Seattle are still very high. Are there ways to include housing for other layers of income in the program? Low income housing doesn't seem to be addressed in the program.
- Meier:** Under the current framework, pedestrian designated streets have a requirement for street-level retail. Other streets do not have retail requirements. We currently have 1000 low-income residential units and are trying to encourage a balance of income levels.
- Dubrow:** When buildings receive transferred development credits, what design requirements or standards will be applied to them? The new developments should be held to a higher standard. Will TDC projects be subject to review Design Review Boards or the Design Commission?
- Miller:** The Neighborhood Design Guidelines should be more specific about TDCs.
- Dubrow:** The number one objective appears to be increased density, second are public amenities, and third high design quality standards. Students at the University of Washington have identified a number of historic resources in Bell Town and the Denny Triangle. This information may be of value to the neighborhood planning groups.
- Meier:** There have been concerns that higher design standards will become a deterrent for development.
- Dubrow:** I am promoting design excellence rather than design adequacy. The objective of promoting high design quality standards should influence the other objectives of

increasing density and providing public amenities. Does the City have criteria or standards for determining which parcels are chosen for increased density.

**Rahaim:** What is the timeframe for initiating the program?

**Meier:** We hope to get the TDCs into use fairly quickly.

**Ousley:** Probably by the end of 1999.

**Jaso:** The existing low-income residential units should be protected as a public amenity.

**Action:** **The Commission appreciates the briefing and postpones making final recommendations for additional review and discussion with the Seattle Planning Commission. The Commission requests that the following issues be addressed and the responses given to Commission staff:**

- give neighborhoods control over where development occurs;
- broaden the range of public amenities and prioritize amenities designated in the Neighborhood plan;
- identify social goals, programs, or facilities that the program can address;
- retain low-income housing;
- define project requirements for design review;
- establish criteria or standards for which parcels are chosen for increased density; and
- conservation of significant or historic structures.

061799.3      Project: **Neighborhood Plans: Columbia City, MLK @ Holly Street, North Beacon Hill, Rainier Beach**

Phase: Briefing

Presenters: Veronica Jackson, Department of Neighborhoods

Time: .75 hr. (SDC Ref. # DC000)

### ***Columbia City Neighborhood Plan***

Key Priorities of the plan include:

- **MLK Corridor/Rainier Corridor**

Streetscape and Pedestrian Improvements

Zoning Revisions

Redevelopment

Gateway Features

- **Housing**

Zoning Revisions

Housing Programs

Development Incentives

- **Transportation**

Links to neighborhood light rail system

Minimize construction impacts

Improve North/South bicycle access

- **Public Safety and Community Livability**

Restore and expand community-based policing

Aggressively enforce property maintenance

- **Columbia City Community Focus**

Preserve the small town character

Encourage redevelopment of Columbia Plaza

Provide for basic infrastructure pedestrian/street improvements

Enhance Columbia Park

Improve pedestrian connections

### ***MLK @ Holly Street Neighborhood Plan***

Key Priorities of the plan include:

- **Public Safety**

*Increase SPD Service Delivery*—bike patrols, nuisance abatement

*Expand Community partnerships with SPD*—Block Watch and Business Watch

*Improve Neighborhood Lighting*—residential and business lighting at a pedestrian scale

*Expand Neighborhood Order Programs*—bus stop maintenance, community clean-ups, youth art, chronic public inebriation

- **Mixed-Town Center**

*MLK @ Othello* light rail station with pedestrian oriented shopping center

*Community plaza*

*Ground floor commercial with 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> story residential*

*Improved streetscapes*

*Economic development* to include home based businesses

- **Revitalization of Commercial Areas**

*Organize commercial nodes along MLK*—into nodes of activity

*Improve physical pedestrian connections*—to residential areas

*Improve business networks*

Encourage business owners to *improve street appeal of businesses*

*Encourage the siting of new and revitalized services—including: grocery store, bakery, movie theater, bookstore, restaurants, and coffee shops.*

■ **Affordable Housing and Residential Stability**

*Expand home ownership opportunities— education, down payment assistance*

*Improve housing stock—single family renovation, multi-family rehab, multi-family design guidelines*

*Support housing opportunities for seniors—transportation support, reverse mortgage, additional senior housing*

*Support nonprofit housing management and development—e.g. SEED and Homesight*

***North Beacon Hill Neighborhood Plan***

Key Priorities of the plan include:

■ **Transportation**

Improve streetscapes

Provide for traffic calming

Extend the boulevard treatment the entire length of Beacon Hill

Improve transit services

Create a station shell at Beacon and Lander

■ **Land Use and Zoning**

Reduce the urban village boundaries to concentrate growth in the core

Downzone some residential properties to reflect character of surrounding neighborhood

Encourage mixed use within the commercial core

Develop design guidelines for mixed use, commercial, and new multi-family development

■ **Library Siting**

Locate within the retail core

Ensure that design fits the character of the neighborhood

■ **Open Space and Urban Design**

Support open space bond issues for future site acquisition

Maintain and upgrade existing parks and open space

Create Vital Streets with pedestrian improvements, gateways, parking, street level retail, and facade transparency

■ **Jefferson Park**

Master Plan for Jefferson Park

Invest in new community facilities—community center, children’s playground, tennis courts, soccer fields, etc.

Improve pedestrian trails and access—fencing, golf course changes, walking/jogging paths

Return historically significant Japanese picnic grounds

Urban Forest Initiative

Art in the Park

***Rainier Beach Neighborhood Plan***

Key Priorities of the plan include:

■ **Henderson Street: Building a Better Boulevard**

Support the MLK @ Henderson Light Rail Station

Develop a boulevard that connects the community and creates a sense of place

Create Quality Housing Stock—design/development standards (e.g. town homes)

Promote economic development with higher density housing, ground floor commercial, and incentives to attract new commercial development



Building upon the presence of the schools aligning Henderson Street and incorporate into the development theme of Henderson

Develop transportation linkages along Henderson to include accommodations for walkers, cyclists, and transit riders

■ **Beach Square: Commercial Core Revitalization**

Encourage economic development by redeveloping the commercial shopping center—to include streetscape and facade improvements, pedestrian oriented capital facilities, and business support and development programs

Promote the development of housing—both single family residential and mixed use

Address shoreline development issues—including community access and Atlantic City boat ramp parking

■ **Community Education**

Provide facilities that meet the needs of students during and after school

Ensure the quality of education programs and incorporate life-long learning concepts

Encourage life-long learning opportunities for adults with a focus on continuing education and job skills development

Support parent and community involvement in the schools to include businesses, churches, and other community based organizations.

For more information on these neighborhood plans contact Veronica Jackson at (206) 684-8495 or [veronica.jackson@ci.seattle.wa.us](mailto:veronica.jackson@ci.seattle.wa.us)

**Discussion:**

**Dubrow:** Have any preservation issues or suggestions for conserving buildings come up in community discussions?

**Jackson:** The North Beacon Hill community did look at the preservation of views, but not of buildings.

**Dubrow:** With approximately 2000 sites identified as meriting preservation, it's surprising that Seattle communities didn't consider the preservation or conservation of buildings a priority.

**Jackson:** The Rainier Beach Neighborhood developed a tour map of significant sites.

**Girvin:** These briefings are very helpful in giving the Commission a contextual framework and foundation for understanding specific projects in future reviews and how they relate to their neighborhoods.

**Action:** **The Commission appreciates the thorough presentation and the comprehensive briefing that provides an important contextual foundation on which the Commission can evaluate specific projects in the future.**

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061799.4     Project: **Downtown Urban Design Plan**  
                  Phase: Briefing  
          Presenters: John Rahaim, Seattle Design Commission  
          Attendees: Dennis Meier, Strategic Planning Office  
                          Ethan Melone, Strategic Planning Office  
                  Time: .75 hr. (SDC Ref. # DC000)

The Downtown Urban Center Planning Group (DUCPG) identified a need for, and recommended the development of, an Urban Design Plan for Downtown in the Downtown Urban Center Neighborhood plan. This recommendation is consistent with Seattle Design Commission recommendations for developing a holistic plan for downtown Seattle. The DUCPG has requested that \$80,000 of the Early Implementation Fund (EIF) be used to fund the first piece of the plan. The “Design Center” was identified as the appropriate agency to oversee the development of the plan and has convened a small informal work group, including representatives from DON, SPO, SPC, and DCLU, to do preliminary scoping for the Plan in order to establish a maximum dollar amount that can be included in the City’s budget process.

The first piece of the Urban Design Plan will be a Gap & Opportunity Analysis of an extensive list of other plans and policy documents. The Plan will also include the following eight priorities as part of Phase One: urban form, sub-area plans for Denny Triangle and the Waterfront, streetscape, view analysis, Green Streets, street vacation and skybridge policies, and conservation.

**Discussion:**

- Dubrow:** How has the Commission been involved in the preliminary scoping efforts?
- Rahaim:** The Commission has not been involved to date. The preliminary scoping efforts have only focused on establishing a budget amount to the Plan. The Commission will be extensively involved in scoping and development of the Downtown Urban Design Plan.
- Dubrow:** What other quasi-public agencies, such as the Port of Seattle, will be involved in the planning process?
- Rahaim:** All of the downtown stakeholders will be involved in the plan. It is crucial that we get input from those affected by the Plan.
- Action:** **The Commission supports the project and recommends that the project be presented to the full Commission until a Commissioner can be assigned to the planning work group.**